



# News Release

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## **State to receive federal shipment of medications to treat swine flu**

*Public health on the lookout for the new virus: still no confirmed cases in Washington*

**OLYMPIA** — State and local public health workers are continuing to look for any sign of the new strain of swine flu in Washington. So far, there are no known cases.

As a precautionary measure, within the next week the state expects to receive a supply of antiviral medication from the federal Strategic National Stockpile. The medication will be enough to treat about 230,000 people. The stockpile also includes gloves, along with other personal protection and medical supplies.

[Swine influenza](http://www.doh.wa.gov/swineflu) (<http://www.doh.wa.gov/swineflu>) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza virus. It only rarely infects humans who have close contact with pigs. The swine flu virus that's being investigated now is different than the typical swine flu virus, and isn't spread from pigs to humans. This new virus is spread person-to-person. There's no risk from eating properly cooked pork or pork products.

Cases have been confirmed in five U.S. states —Texas, California, Ohio, New York, and Kansas, and in several other countries.

“At this time, there are no cases in Washington, yet this is a serious situation. It's a new virus and we're learning about it in real time,” said Washington Secretary of Health Mary Selecky. “We're working with local and federal public health officials to track the disease, share what we learn, and provide the best information and guidance we can to the public.”

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“The best thing people can do to avoid spreading any type of flu or respiratory illness is to stay home when you’re sick, cover your cough, and wash your hands often,” said State Health Officer Dr. Maxine Hayes. “It’s especially important for people with flu-like symptoms to stay home, limit their contact with others, and see a health care provider if they become seriously ill.”

Symptoms of swine flu are similar to regular “seasonal” flu and include fever, muscle aches, cough, and sometimes trouble breathing. State and local health have notified health care providers around the state that a new strain of swine flu has been identified so they’re on the look out for it.

Antiviral medications — Tamiflu® and Relenza® — can be used to treat flu. These medications must be prescribed by a health care provider. They’re commonly available through commercial pharmacies.

The Department of Health is asking all clinical laboratories to send all samples that test positive for type A flu to the state Public Health Laboratories for further testing. If samples can’t be specifically identified they’ll be sent to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) — the only U.S. public health laboratory that can positively identify this new type of flu.

The CDC has issued a “[travel health warning](http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/content/SwineFluMexico.aspx)” ([wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/content/SwineFluMexico.aspx](http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/content/SwineFluMexico.aspx)) recommending people avoid non-essential travel to Mexico. They’re the best source for the [latest travel information](http://www.cdc.gov/travel) (<http://www.cdc.gov/travel>).

The Department of Health has a [swine flu fact sheet in multiple languages](http://www.doh.wa.gov/swineflu) (<http://www.doh.wa.gov/swineflu>) on our Web site. You can also find information there on how to [prevent the spread of germs](http://www.doh.wa.gov/phepr/handbook/prevent.htm) ([www.doh.wa.gov/phepr/handbook/prevent.htm](http://www.doh.wa.gov/phepr/handbook/prevent.htm)).

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